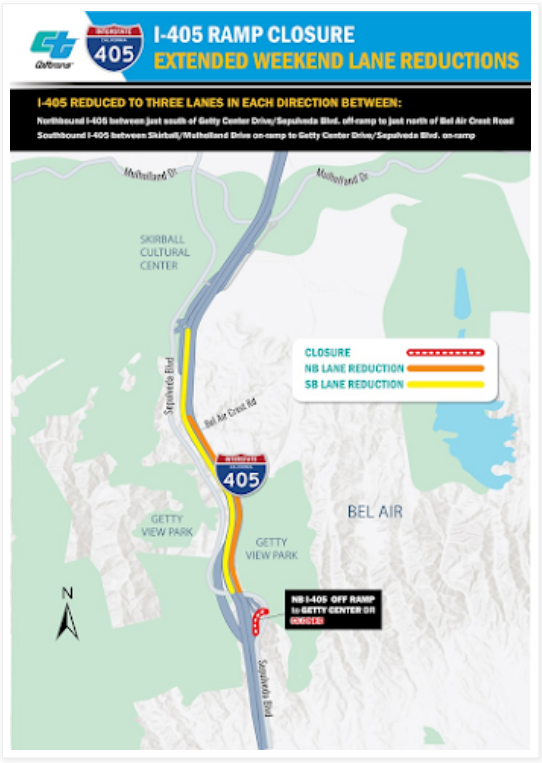
UCLA Faculty Association

News and opinion from Dan Mitchell since 2009

Saturday, January 31, 2026

Lane Squeeze Coming Next Weekend

Caltrans Announces I-405 Reduced to Three Lanes in Each Direction Through the Sepulveda Pass: February 2026 Schedule


I-405 RAMP CLOSURE
EXTENDED WEEKEND LANE REDUCTIONS
I-405 REDUCED TO THREE LANES IN EACH DIRECTION BETWEEN:
Northbound I-405 between just south of Getty Center Drive/Sepulveda Blvd. off-ramp to just north of Bel Air Crest Road
Southbound I-405 between Skirball/Mulholland Drive on-ramp to Getty Center Drive/Sepulveda Blvd. on-ramp
Mulholland Dr
SKIRBALL CULTURAL CENTER
CLOSURE
NB LANE REDUCTION
SB LANE REDUCTION
Sepulveda Blvd
Bel Air Crest Rd
405
GETTY VIEW PARK
BEL AIR
NB I-405 OFF RAMP to GETTY CENTER DR CLOSED
N

Caltrans announces extended weekend lane reductions along Interstate 405 (I-405) through the Sepulveda Pass. The freeway will be reduced to three lanes in each direction and motorists are strongly encouraged to seek alternate routes and explore public transportation options to reach their destinations.

Commuters can expect extended weekend lane reductions on the following:

10 p.m. Friday, Feb. 6, through 5 a.m. Monday, Feb. 9

Motorists traveling along I-405 will experience the following lane reductions and ramp closures:

Northbound I-405

- Reduced to three lanes between just south of Getty Center Drive/Sepulveda Blvd. off-ramp to just north of Bel Air Crest Road
- Getty Center Drive off-ramp closed

Southbound I-405

- Reduced to three lanes between Skirball Center Drive/Mulholland Drive on-ramp to Getty Center Drive/Sepulveda Blvd. on-ramp

Alternate Routes for I-405

- Sepulveda Boulevard to northbound I-405: Travel north on Sepulveda Boulevard and then east/north on Skirball Center Drive to the on-ramp to northbound I-405
- Sepulveda Boulevard to southbound I-405: Travel south on Sepulveda Boulevard and then south on Church Lane to the Sunset Boulevard on-ramp to southbound I-405

Extended Weekend Lane Reductions will occur about every two weeks along various sections of I-405, unless noted otherwise. There will be about 25 extended weekend lane reductions for this project. Due to weather or operational reasons, the schedule is subject to change including the times and dates of closures, the number of lanes closed and other details.

The Council of UC Faculty Associations

- Fight for the Future of Higher Education: Academic Freedom from the Classroom to the Clinic
- Our Concerns Over Revisions to APMs 15 and 16
- Fight for the Future of Higher Ed Town Hall
- Letter from AAUP to UC Objecting to Trellix
- Judge rules Trump demands of UCLA must be made public

Remaking the University

- Minneapolis Lessons for Higher Education - 1/31/2026
- Achieving Our University - 1/20/2026
- Liner Note 46. On Direct Faculty Control of Universities - 1/17/2026

Higher Ed. News & Commentary

- Chronicle of Higher Education
- Inside Higher Education
- Remaking the University
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- California Professor

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Other Faculty Organizations

- American Association of University Professors
- California Faculty Association (NEA)
- UC-AFT

Topics

Residents and businesses located near construction may experience noise, vibrations and dust associated with construction activities...

This work is part of the I-405 Pavement Rehabilitation Project between the Los Angeles communities of Van Nuys and Westwood along the Sepulveda Pass. This project will apply about $143.7 million toward improving the safety and mobility along I-405 between Van Nuys and Westwood as well as extend the pavement life...

Full release at https://dot.ca.gov/caltrans-near-me/district-7/district-7-news/d7-i405-extended-weekend-sepulveda-pass-feb-2026.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 3:30 AM No comments:

Labels: traffic, transportation, UCLA

Straws in the Wind - Part 239

From the Yale Daily News: ...*Administrators recently revealed a three-year plan to reduce enrollment in the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences by about 13 percent in the humanities and social sciences and by about 5 percent in STEM programs. The measure came as the University tightens its budget in anticipation of an upcoming increase in its federal endowment tax under President Donald Trump's signature legislative achievement...*

Graduate School of Arts and Sciences Dean Lynn Cooley wrote in a statement provided to the News by a Yale spokesperson that the "modest" enrollment reductions are a response to a smaller graduate school budget, 93 percent of which goes to student support. She added that administrators consulted with leaders of each department, as well as a faculty working group, about the reductions...

Cooley wrote that the difference between enrollment cuts in STEM programs and those in the humanities and social sciences reflects the fields' different sources of funding. While students in the humanities and social sciences receive funding drawn from the endowment investment returns, Cooley wrote, STEM students receive funds from both the endowment and external grants and fellowships...

Full story at https://yaledailynews.com/articles/graduate-students-say-enrollment-cuts-risk-hurting-culture-teaching.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 3:20 AM No comments:

Labels: Yale

Watch the Regents Meetings of Jan. 21, 2026

politics (2363) UC (2096) UC Regents (1888) health care (1425) State Budget (1276) governor (1125) UC budget crisis (970) diversity (962) UC-Berkeley (912) pension (662) pensions (593) admissions (543) athletics (539) tuition (533) CSU (411) transportation (395) UC-Davis (377) online education (339) UCOP (312) uc retirement (308) ucrp (301) traffic (300) audio (291) UC enrollment (282) new hotel-conference center (282) UC-San Diego (263) enrollment (259) community colleges (243) LAO (231) UC-Irvine (185) fund raising (168) UC-Santa Barbara (162) UC-San Francisco (160) UC-Santa Cruz (159) controller (149) faculty center (144) UC-Riverside (142) ballot propositions (132) CalPERS (122) UC-Merced (117) faculty pay (109) Master Plan (106) Yudof (90) UCRS retirement (62) parking (61) Faculty Association at UCLA (60) privatization (59) CalSTRS (50) UC Berkeley (35) copyright (35) campus climate survey (28) UCRS (22) Michigan Model (18) UC Merced (17) uc funding (16) Regents (15) State Contribution (14) UCOF (14) faculty recruitment (12) UC pay (7) graduate education (6) UC San Diego (5) UC Irvine (3) UCpolitics (3) teaching evaluation (3) UC Santa Cruz (2)

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Lane Squeeze Coming Next Weekend

Straws in the Wind - Part 239

Watch the Regents Meetings of Jan. 21, 2026

Just the (Corrected) Facts - Part 2

Is small beautiful in the current higher ed climate?

Climate Proposal

Straws in the Wind - Part 238

Inquiring Minds

Straws in the Wind - Part 237

Encampment Case Goes Forward - Decision

Watch the Regents Meetings of January 20, 2026

Straws in the Wind - Part 236 (Compact 2.0)

Former UCLA Law Dean Named Head of Columbia

We are catching up with the Regents meeting of last week. Note that we already covered the termination of a tenured UCLA faculty member.* And we covered the previous day earlier this week.** The **Board** meeting began with public comments. Topics included UC-Davis women's sports, Teamster bargaining, AFSCME bargaining, grad student support especially international students/use of emergency funds, AI-generated sexual abuse, rent increases by a firm owned by Brookfield Investments, non-cooperation with Trump administration, essential needs of undocumented students, demand to divest from Blackrock and Blackstone, student mental health, Native American remains repatriation, antisemitism, termination of a tenured faculty member, Turning Point and other protests, support for a science center, and NIL for athletes who are injured. There was a brief AFSCME demonstration at one point.

Following public comments, the student president of UCSA discussed various topics including transfer students being below the targeted percentage and concerns about the proposed new faculty disciplinary process. The grad student president raised the issue of sharing of student data with the feds and rent burdens. Thereafter, a new UC-Santa Cruz fundraising campaign was endorsed. Then the above-mentioned faculty termination hearing was held.

At **Finance and Capital Strategies**, there was a report on the governor's January budget proposal which we have discussed previously. It was noted that the proposal was based on optimistic revenue projections which might not work out. It was also noted that there was potential in the legislature for bonds to finance research and capital projects. Regent Cohen raised the issues of the longer-term fiscal outlook, i.e., beyond the upcoming year. Regent Park asked whether there was a mechanism for developing a new compact with whoever was elected governor in November 2026. (The current compact expires after 2026-27.)

At **Academic and Students Affairs**, professional tuition requests were approved for selected programs. Then the proposed faculty discipline process was approved. Coming up with a new process was mandated by the legislature. The new version was approved by the Academic Council. The consultation process with faculty and the Regents was noted. Under the new process, there are specified time limits for the various steps, a systemwide faculty pool so that there will always be faculty available to staff the process, and more precise language and definitions. The new process was approved. Regent Leib requested a report on the process after two years. Then the full **board** endorsed the various committee endorsements.

As always, we preserve Regents meetings since the Regents have no policy on duration of retention. You can find links to the meeting below:

General site for January 21: https://archive.org/details/1-regents-board-1-21-2026

Full board (initial meeting): https://ia600306.us.archive.org/22/items/1-regents-board-1-21-2026/1-Regents%20Board%201-21-2026.mp4

Finance & Capital Strategies, Academic & Student Affairs, final board session: https://ia800306.us.archive.org/22/items/1-regents-board-1-21-2026/2-Regents%20Finance%20and%20Capital%20Strategies%2C%20Academic%20and%20Student%20Affairs%2C%20Board%201-21-2026.mp4

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*https://uclafacultyassociation.blogspot.com/2026/01/its-hard-to-keep-lid-on-part-10.html; https://uclafacultyassociation.blogspot.com/2026/01/its-hard-to-keep-lid-on-part-9-and-now.html.

**https://uclafacultyassociation.blogspot.com/2026/01/watch-regents-meetings-of-january-20.html.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 3:10 AM No comments:

Labels: legislature, politics, State Budget, tuition, UC budget crisis, UC Regents, UC-Santa Cruz, UCLA

Friday, January 30, 2026

Just the (Corrected) Facts - Part 2

Bubble Worries
Straws in the Wind - Part 235
ICE Matters
Some day
Straws in the Wind - Part 234
It's hard to keep the lid on - Part 10 (confirmation)
Pension Payments at Risk - Part 2
SAT vs. ACT vs. UC
Straws in the Wind - Part 233
Will Harvard Continue to Lead the Charge? - Part 112
In Dialogue or in Denial - Part 2
I Never Promised You a Rose Bowl? - Part 10 (alter...
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Wikipedia solicitations
I Never Promised You a Rose Bowl? - Part 9
Straws in the Wind - Part 231
Will Harvard Continue to Lead the Charge - Part 111
Bond May Be Coming
Straws in the Wind - Part 230
It's hard to keep the lid on - Part 9 (and now it'...
Just the (Corrected) Facts
Terminated
Straws in the Wind - Part 229
Wikipedia Scams
Why Folks Are Nervous - Part 3
Straws in the Wind - Part 228 (if you can't lick '...
No Way Out (1950) - Updated Link
TMT?
Straws in the Wind - Part 227
And things roll along without a Master Plan
UC Should Cash the Check Quickly
Straws in the Wind - Part 226
Union Negotiation News
I Never Promised You a Rose Bowl? - Part 8
Straws in the Wind - Part 225
Data Breach at Credit Union
Subway Issues Today
Extra Cash Continues
Straws in the Wind - Part 224
New Bus Lane to UCLA
Pension Payments at Risk
Why folks are nervous - Part 2
Straws in the Wind - Part 223
Will Harvard Continue to Lead the Charge? - Part 110
New Anderson Dean
No Retroactive Pension Payments for Delayed Filings

Blog readers will recall our previous post about campus Academic Senate concerns about the UCLA budget and the sharing of budget figures by Murphy Hall.* In essence, Murphy Hall claims to be sharing data, at least with some committees, and the Senate leadership thinks otherwise.

There has be a lot of back and forth on this issue which seems to be coming to a head at the February 5 meeting of the Legislative Assembly, which has just issued its meeting agenda. The agenda runs well over 900 pages (!), mainly with other issues. But section 5 deals with the ongoing budget controversy.

It is helpful to start with a table from page 833 of the agenda which the Committee on Planning and Budget appears to have pulled together from various oral and slide presentations provided by Murphy Hall. (The table presumably does not include the hospitals.) I will refer to what is shown on the table as the campus General Fund following common usage for state and local government units, since I assume there are other campus funds - such as for the hospitals, other enterprises, and athletics.

Table 1. APB-Reported General Funds (19900) Sources and Uses ($ millions, rounded)

	Description	FY24	FY25	FY26
Sources	State general funds, gross tuition, UCOP return-to-aid, other	1,616.4	1,610.7	1,657.9
Uses				
Category 6	Base allocations to organizations (issued July 1)	1,222.7	1,263.9	1,427.7
Category 7	Salary and benefits increases	59.6	59.2	70.1
Category 8	Academic/research support, priority programs, strategic initiatives	94.8	152.7	74.3
Category 9	Student support above UCOP-mandated return-to-aid	62.9	61.6	59
Category 10	Support for lecturers and TAs	61.7	67.1	67.1
Category 11	Capital projects and debt service	131.4	99.3	87.3
Category 12	UCOP operating budget and UCPath assessment	82.5	80.1	83.3
Category 13	Other academic and operating support	85.4	106.7	63.3
	Beginning Balance	-46.2	30.2	-413.7
	Operating Results (pre-new requests)	-184.6	-280.1	-274.2
	Additional New Central Funding Requests (Dec 2025)		-163.7	-111.6
	Adjusted Projected Deficit		413.7	799.5
	Corrective Actions	214.8		
	Ending Balance w/ Corrective Actions	30.2		-

Note: Corrective actions undertaken for FY24 were $214.8m. No corrective actions have been decided for FY25-26.

Note that there is no breakdown of revenue on the table. All we learn is the revenues are basically flat over the 3 years shown. Perhaps the various sources are broken out elsewhere. The breakdown of spending is also not particularly useful. What is called Category 6 for "allocations to organizations" is also not broken down. I assume the organizations are units such as schools and departments. Clearly, you want useful breakdowns.

There is some confusion of terminology. The general fund apparently started fiscal year 2024-25 with a negative balance of $46.2 million. The balance would have been pushed further in the red to the tune of $184.6 million (a workload deficit) had "corrections actions" of +$214.8 million not been taken. We don't have any breakdown of what those actions were. But as a result of taking them, the general fund ended with a positive balance of $30.2 million.

What about fiscal 2025-26, the current year? There would have been a workload deficit of $280.1 million absent anything else happening. But "new central funding requests" - we don't know what these were - came along in December to the tune of an additional $163.7 million during the current year. (Are "requests" mandatory? Can they be negotiated? Refused?) Assuming the requests are mandatory, there would be a deficit of of $280.1 + $163.7 = $443.8. So, absent any corrective actions for this year, the projection would be a General Fund with a negative balance of $413.7 million. (The table calls this a deficit which is bad terminology and puts it on the wrong line. It should be on the bottom line. There is confusion between deficit - a flow concept - and ending balance - a stock concept.)

Before we get to next year, 2026-27, what can we expect in corrective actions to be taken this year in which 7 months have already passed? It's hard to believe that no plans for such actions are in the works. However, on January 26, Chancellor Frenk and EVC Hunt responded to a

Straws in the Wind - Part 222
I Never Promised You a Rose Bowl? - Part 7 (earlie...
The Underside of UCLA Receives National Attention
Straws in the Wind - Part 221
The Visit
Faculty Discipline & Name Disclosures
Straws in the Wind - Part 220
Still More on the Need for a New Master Plan
UC Enrollment
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The Regents Are Coming: January 20-21, 2026
The No-Hassles-While-I'm-in-Office State Budget Pr...
Fast Movers
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Dukakis Event This Coming Tuesday
No Cap
People are starting to notice
Today Is Budget Day
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Yesterday's State of the State: Little Concrete on...
All in 30 Minutes - Part 5
State of the State Due Today - Update
I think I can use "entourage" in a sentence
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And yet more on Harvard's data manipulation affair
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Grade Inflation Is Not the Same as Price Inflation...
UCLA ahead in the Wikipedia editing sweepstakes
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Dodd
Data Privacy
The coming state budget squeeze
New Research Costs for 2026
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I Never Promised You a Rose Bowl? - Part 6
4th Quarter 2025 Wrap-Up on the Governor
Will Harvard Continue to Lead the Charge? - Part 107

► 2025 (1139)
► 2024 (832)

Senate request for detailed written information in a letter (pp. 841-842 of the agenda) that gives no clue to what the corrective actions for 2025-26 are planned. Can there really be no plans when more than half the fiscal year has passed? It's not clear which is worse: not sharing plans that exist or having no plans to share.

The table does have some projections for next year. If we made no corrective actions this year, and no corrective actions next year, the General Fund would have a balance of -$799.5 million. Presumably, that is not what will occur. There will be some corrective actions this year and next. And if I had to guess, not only are there some preliminary, but undisclosed, plans for this year, there are also plans for next year.

There is a second table (p. 837) that tries to provide some detail, although it, too, raises questions.

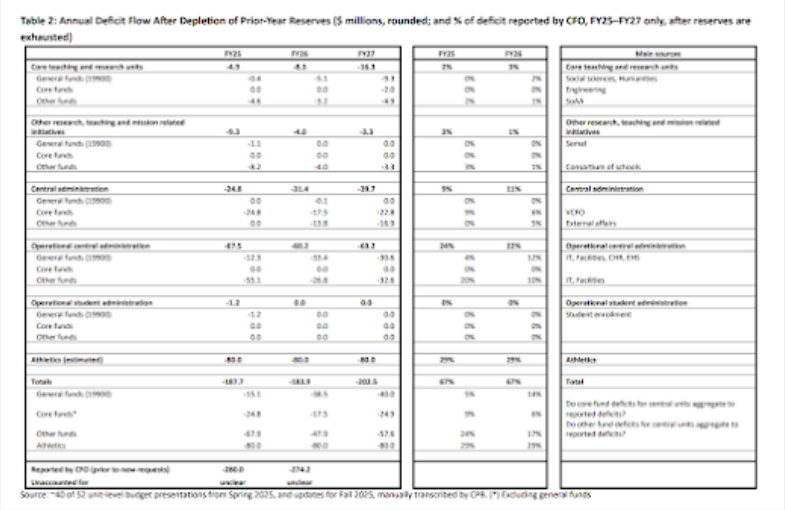

Table 2: Annual Deficit Flow After Depletion of Prior-Year Reserves ($ millions, rounded; and % of deficit reported by CFO, FY25–FY27 only, after reserves are exhausted)

	FY25	FY26	FY27	FY25	FY26	Main sources
Core teaching and research units	-4.9	-8.5	-16.1	3%	3%	Core teaching and research units
General funds (15900)	-0.4	-5.1	-9.3	0%	2%	Social sciences, Humanities
Core funds	0.0	0.0	-2.0	0%	0%	Engineering
Other funds	-4.6	-3.2	-4.9	3%	1%	SoMA
Other research, teaching and mission related initiatives	-6.3	-4.0	-3.3	3%	1%	Other research, teaching and mission related initiatives
General funds (15900)	-1.1	0.0	0.0	0%	0%	Semel
Core funds	0.0	0.0	0.0	0%	0%	
Other funds	-4.2	-4.0	-3.3	3%	1%	Consortium of schools
Central administration	-24.8	-31.4	-39.7	9%	11%	Central administration
General funds (15900)	0.0	-0.1	0.0	0%	0%	
Core funds	-24.8	-17.5	-22.8	9%	6%	VCRO
Other funds	0.0	-13.8	-16.9	0%	5%	External affairs
Operational central administration	-67.5	-60.2	-63.3	24%	22%	Operational central administration
General funds (15900)	-12.3	-33.4	-33.6	4%	12%	IT, Facilities, CHR, EHS
Core funds	0.0	0.0	0.0	0%	0%	
Other funds	-55.1	-26.8	-32.6	20%	10%	IT, Facilities
Operational student administration	-1.2	0.0	0.0	0%	0%	Operational student administration
General funds (15900)	-1.2	0.0	0.0	0%	0%	Student enrollment
Core funds	0.0	0.0	0.0	0%	0%	
Other funds	0.0	0.0	0.0	0%	0%	
Athletics (estimated)	-80.0	-80.0	-80.0	29%	29%	Athletics
Totals	-187.7	-183.9	-202.5	67%	67%	Total
General funds (15900)	-15.1	-38.5	-43.0	5%	14%	
Core funds*	-24.8	-17.5	-24.9	9%	6%	Do core fund deficits for central units aggregate to reported deficits?
Other funds	-67.9	-47.9	-57.6	24%	17%	Do other fund deficits for central units aggregate to reported deficits?
Athletics	-80.0	-80.0	-80.0	29%	29%	
Reported by CFO (prior to new requests)	-280.0	-274.2				
Unaccounted for	unclear	unclear				

Source: ~40 of 52 unit-level budget presentations from Spring 2025, and updates for Fall 2025, manually transcribed by CPI. (*) Excluding general funds

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First, note that departments and schools are lumped together as core teaching and research units. Second, since the table ostensibly shows what percentage of the deficit is attributable to the various categories shown, it is unclear how costs are allocated. Who pays the electric bill and other overhead? The main thing we learn is that an annual deficit of $80 million/year is attributed to athletics for all three years shown. (But we are paying UC-Berkeley a "tax," nonetheless, to compensate it for revenue lost when UCLA switched athletic conferences.)

Finally, note that there have to be reserves outside the general fund which are not shown in the budgetary data provided. Since the General Fund started fiscal year 2024-25 with a negative balance, there had to be cash from somewhere to cover that negative balance. Without full reserve data, the picture of UCLA financial status is incomplete. We have a partial income statement but no statement of assets and liabilities.

Due to concerns about incomplete budgetary information, a group of faculty have submitted a resolution to be considered on Feb. 5: (Sec. 6 of the agenda, pp. 870-871)

Resolution on Shared Governance, Senate Consultation, and Administrative Accountability

Jan 26, 2026

Sponsors:

- Hiram Beltrán-Sánchez, Department of Community Health Sciences
- Aparna Bhaduri, Department of Biological Chemistry
- Michael Chwe, Department of Political Science
- Matthew Fisher, Department of English
- Andrea S. Goldman, Department of History
- Yogita Goyal, Department of English, Department of African American Studies
- Miloš Jovanović, Department of History
- Koh Choon Hwee, Department of History
- Gregory H. Leazer, Department of Information Studies

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► 2022 (719)
► 2021 (710)
► 2020 (914)
► 2019 (671)
► 2018 (595)
► 2017 (666)
► 2016 (715)
► 2015 (765)
► 2014 (704)
► 2013 (776)
► 2012 (839)
► 2011 (738)
► 2010 (431)
► 2009 (12)

Contributors

- California Policy Issues
- Toby Higbie
- UCLA Faculty Association

Whereas the University of California's tradition of shared governance recognizes faculty participation in the operation and guidance of the University and in sustaining academic excellence;

Whereas the University of California and its Academic Senate concur that meaningful faculty consultation requires timely access to relevant information, substantive administrative engagement,

and reliance on established faculty governance bodies, and that shared governance is undermined when:

- information necessary for informed faculty advice is withheld, fragmented, or delayed;

- faculty consultation is treated as advisory in name only, without substantive response;

- decisions proceed while consultation is ongoing, rendering it ineffective or merely procedural;

- assurances are offered without supporting data or follow-up; or

- ad hoc administrative committees are substituted for established Senate bodies;

Whereas there is a multi-year record of Academic Senate requests to restore meaningful shared governance, including resolutions adopted by the Legislative Assembly on November 13, 2025, for which administrative responses have not substantively addressed the requests made by the Legislative Assembly;

Whereas recent administrative initiatives have relied on non-Senate advisory groups, including One IT working groups and the Executive Budget Advisory Group (EBAG), which are not accountable to Academic Senate governance and do not fulfill the administration's obligation to consult formally with the Senate;

Therefore be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly finds that non-Senate advisory groups cannot substitute for formal consultation with the Academic Senate and its standing committees as required under Regents Bylaw 40.

Therefore be it further resolved that the Legislative Assembly expresses its dissatisfaction with the administration's responses to the Legislative Assembly resolutions adopted on November 13, 2025, and reiterates its prior requests for transparency, accountability, and substantive engagement as set forth in those resolutions;

Therefore be it further resolved that the Legislative Assembly requests that the administration cease characterizing non-Senate working groups and advisory bodies as consultation and instead engage in formal, timely, and substantive consultation with the Academic Senate and its standing committees, including timely and substantive responses to Senate requests;

Therefore be it further resolved that the Legislative Assembly requests that the administration report to the Legislative Assembly on the specific steps it will take to restore meaningful consultation with the Academic Senate and its standing committees, including changes to the use of advisory groups and the provision of timely and substantive responses to Senate requests, the report to be delivered at the next meeting of the Legislative Assembly;

Therefore be it further resolved that, on the basis of the foregoing, the Legislative Assembly finds that the administration has failed to meet its obligations under shared governance, as defined by University bylaws.

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*https://uclafacultyassociation.blogspot.com/2026/01/just-corrected-facts.html.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 4:43 PM No comments:

Labels: athletics, UC-Berkeley, UCLA

Is small beautiful in the current higher ed climate?

From Ian Bogost in The Atlantic: *In the waning heat of last summer, freshly back in my office at a major research university, I found myself considering the higher-education hellscape that had lately descended upon the nation. I'd spent months reporting on the Trump administration's attacks on universities for The Atlantic, speaking with dozens of administrators, faculty, and students about the billions of dollars in cuts to public funding for research and the resulting collapse of "college life."At the same time, I'd been chronicling the spread of AI-powered chatbots that have already changed undergraduates forever...*

I texted, emailed, telephoned, and Zoomed with friends in higher-education leadership. Current and former heads of both research universities and liberal-arts colleges confirmed my intuition: Well-resourced and prestigious small colleges are less exposed in almost every way to the crises that higher ed faces...

I came to Amherst College too late in the autumn to observe peak foliage... At most universities, grad students play a crucial role within the research system: They perform the frontline work of science. Faculty members get federal grants, which are used to pay for doctoral students, who in turn serve as laboratory staff. Professors' feeling of worth and productivity may be a function of how many doctoral students they advise—because that helps determine how many studies they can carry out, how many papers they can publish, and what sorts of new grants they can win to keep the process going...

A school like Amherst, though, which has no doctoral programs whatsoever, is free of the rat race of research productivity and expenditure. As these colleges like to point out, that's good for undergrads, because faculty must focus on education. The lack of doctoral research programs also makes the schools more resilient to bullying from Washington. In 2025, the Trump administration made a point of suspending hundreds of millions of dollars in research grants to Columbia, Harvard, Northwestern, and other schools... With so much funding endangered all at once, targeted universities had little choice but to negotiate—which is to say, to accede to some portion of the Trump administration's demands.

At Amherst, this level of pressure simply couldn't be applied. In 2024, the college took in around $3 million from all of its federal research grants put together... In truth, the most important scientific and medical discoveries aren't likely to be made at a place like Amherst or Smith, the nearby women's college, which tend to pay their own students to work on faculty research. But this need not be a limitation for undergraduates. The conditions that produce landmark discoveries are not necessarily the same ones that produce a serious education...

At a small liberal-arts college, where a cohort may number fewer than 500 people, admissions officers can also take a stronger hand in assembling a group of students who match the institution's culture and its vibe while also having very different backgrounds. And the fact that almost everyone at a small liberal-arts college tends to live on campus, or very close to it, adds to the sense of intimacy. "It's just much easier for me to get to know faculty here, much easier for me to get to know students, much easier for me to hear what's on their minds," Amherst's president, Michael Elliott, told me.

One effect of this, he said, is that professors actually show up to faculty meetings to talk about the future of their institution. They participate in budgeting conversations, debate the creation of majors, and approve new courses. This is decidedly not the norm at many larger universities, where professors may not see these meetings as a core part of the job, and where administrators can ignore them altogether...

Perhaps no threat to higher ed is more acute than the recent, rapid spread of generative AI. Davidson prides itself on having an unusually deliberate honor code. (Students I spoke with said this code is taken so seriously that they can leave their belongings anywhere on campus without fear that they will be stolen.) But the seductions of ChatGPT are hard to resist, and... the college has seen an increase in code violations due to AI. That sounded like less of a problem here than elsewhere, though. If the students are availing themselves of the technology, then at least they appear to be doing so with some reservations...

There is the nagging question of practicality. Even if you believe that a liberal-arts college offers the best education, going to school to learn how to think might seem like a luxury today. In the end, you'll still need to earn some kind of living. If the paths for getting there—which may include postgraduate study in a doctoral program or professional school—are diminishing, then college itself will follow suit.

Still, after spending several weeks on my tour of wealthy, liberal-arts colleges, I grew to think that the pitch they're making to prospective students and their parents for the fall of 2026 was convincing. All things considered, the form of higher ed that they provide seems poised to be the most resilient in the years to come...

Full story at https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/2026/01/liberal-arts-college-war-higher-ed/685800/.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 8:33 AM No comments:

Labels: Amherst, Columbia, Davidson, Harvard, Northwestern U, politics, Smith College

Climate Proposal

DECARBONIZATION STUDIES AND KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF EACH CAMPUS

	UCB	UCR	UCSD	UCD	UCM	UCLA	UCSC	UCSF	UCI	UCSB
Academic health center	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No
Cogeneration capacity (MW)	25	—	30	27	—	43	4	14	19	—
Year cogeneration plant built	1987	—	2001	1998	—	1994	2015	1998	2007	—
Facilities (square feet)*	16.8M	8.8M	25.1M	20.2M	3.1M	36.6M	5.9M	11.9M	14.4M	8.6M
Total electricity use (MWhs/year)	220.7K	125.1K	385.6K	337.5K	43.4K	444.2K	58.7K	193K	210.8K	88.8K
Percent of electricity supplied from cogeneration	83%	—	59%	26%	—	65%	61%	35%	42%	—
Total gas use (MMBTU/year)	2.4M	530K	4.18M	2.13M	140K	4.05M	570K	1.38M	1.36M	340K
Percent of gas used at cogeneration and/or central plant	90%	80%	62%	89%	20%	90%	63%	72%	99%	N/A
Energy costs in 2023 ($)	44M	22M	65M	60M	11M	83M	13M	43M	34M	17M

**Square footage may exclude certain real estate holdings and off-campus buildings, including off-campus housing, university extensions, clinics and research locations. Academic health center data is combined with campus data where applicable.*

Source: https://ucop.app.box.com/s/kkyw436a9i10q80gtqmi0w4tqaj2gjyc (Fossil-Free UC Task Force, 2025)

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The systemwide Academic Council of the Academic Senate has before it a proposal from UC-San Diego and UC-San Francisco to create a Committee on Climate Change and Sustainability. Its goal seems to be advice on how to "decarbonize" energy consumption on the various UC campuses. As the chart above shows, that goal might be particularly challenging for UCLA which at present generates about two thirds of its campus electricity from an on-campus facility fueled by natural gas built in the 1990s. (Photo to the right.) Although UC-Berkeley generates a larger percentage, that campus is smaller due to the absence of a medical facility.

The proposal can be found at https://senate.universityofcalifornia.edu/_files/underreview/council-chair-systemwide-senate-review-committee-on-sustainability.pdf.

A request for comments by campus senates has been made. Comments are due by April 21.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 3:30 AM No comments:

Labels: UC-Berkeley, UCLA

Straws in the Wind - Part 238

From the Chronicle of Higher Education: *...The Kansas Board of Regents directed ...that tenured professors must now develop work plans that will be used for annual evaluations and undergo post-tenure review every five years, down from every seven. Those who receive an "unsatisfactory" annual evaluation will be "subject to dismissal, reassignment, an additional one-year improvement plan, or other personnel actions."*

Meanwhile, all full-time faculty members will be expected to teach a set number of credit hours per semester: six to nine for those at the state's three research institutions — the University of Kansas, Kansas State University, and Wichita State University — and 12 for professors at the regional institutions — Pittsburg State University, Emporia State University, and Fort Hays State University. Each institution will determine the percentages of time faculty members should devote to teaching, research, and service, within ranges provided by the regents.

The new policies come one year after a bill allowing tenure to be "at any time revoked, limited, altered or otherwise modified by the awarding institution" or by regents was introduced in the Kansas House of Representatives. While that bill stalled, it signaled increasing legislative interest in tenure reform.

This year's policy changes, which passed unanimously, were Kansas regents' proactive attempt to placate Republican lawmakers who might continue to seek drastic changes, Rusty Monhollon, the board's vice president for academic affairs, told The Chronicle. "That was our motivation: Having a stricter tenure or workload policy was preferable to not having tenure at all," he said...

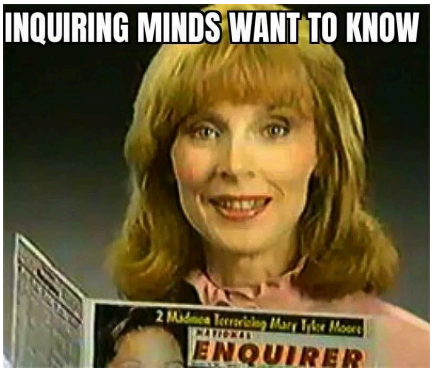
Full story at https://www.chronicle.com/article/another-states-public-universities-are-tightening-post-tenure-review-and-dictating-teaching-loads.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 3:20 AM No comments:

Labels: Emporia State U, Fort Hays State U, Kansas State U, Pittsburg State U, U of Kansas, Wichita State U

Thursday, January 29, 2026

Inquiring Minds



From Education Week: *Are high school students getting the preparation they need for college math? The question, long a focus of study in K-12 math education and policy, is now the subject of a Senate inquiry. Sen. Bill Cassidy, a Republican from Louisiana, sent letters to nearly three dozen selective colleges and universities on Friday, requesting information about the math abilities of their incoming first-year students.*

The move follows the release of a November report from the ***University of California, San Diego****, which found a steep increase over the past five years in the number of freshmen at the institution requiring remedial math classes. The report, compiled by an internal group of staff, made waves across the national media landscape, with reporters and commentators sounding the alarm and offering various diagnoses of the findings, from lower academic standards and a lack of focus on foundational skills instruction in K-12 to UC San Diego's removal of standardized-testing requirements, such as the SAT or ACT, for entrance to the university...*

Full story at https://www.edweek.org/teaching-learning/are-students-prepared-for-college-level-math-a-senator-wants-to-know/2026/01.

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As we keep saying,* it's time for the Regents to forget the politics involved and revisit the admissions issue. At the time testing was dropped, the Regents went against the advice of an Academic Senate report.

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*https://uclafacultyassociation.blogspot.com/2026/01/sat-vs-act-vs-uc.html.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 3:30 AM No comments:

Labels: admissions, politics, UC-San Diego

Straws in the Wind - Part 237

From Inside Higher Ed: *A voting student position on the Iowa Board of Regents would be eliminated under a new bill advanced by the Hawkeye State's House higher education subcommittee... If passed and signed into law, the bill would replace the student regent with a ninth one appointed by the governor. In addition, seven new nonvoting member seats would be established: three for students, two for state senators and two for state representatives. The proposed legislation also details several new policies and programs the board would be required to establish and would give members of the state's General Assembly the ability to override board and university expenditures through a joint resolution.*

The policies outlined align with the key higher education priorities for Republicans in the statehouse who hold a majority. They include:

- *Establishing a post-tenure review process*
- *Developing approval standards for new academic programs*
- *Barring faculty senates from "exercising any governance authority over the institution"*
- *Conducting biennial reviews of all general education requirements and low-enrollment academic programs*
- *Creating an ombudsman office that will "investigate complaints of violations of state or federal law or board policy" ...*

Full story at https://www.insidehighered.com/news/quick-takes/2026/01/23/iowa-lawmakers-seek-end-student-vote-board-regents.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 3:20 AM No comments:

Labels: Iowa State, politics, U of Iowa

Encampment Case Goes Forward - Decision

A lawsuit that arose out of the UCLA encampments, *MATTHEW WEINBERG et al., Plaintiffs, v. NATIONAL STUDENTS FOR JUSTICE IN PALESTINE et al., Defendants*, can go forward after a Jan. 20th court decision.*

You can find an analysis and summary of the case in a piece by UCLA Prof. Eugene Volokh in his Volokh Conspiracy website:

Volokh notes that "*the factual claims at this point are just allegations, and the court concludes only that, if the allegations are found to be true, plaintiffs could prevail*."

From the decision:

...The sheer volume of alleged incidents of exclusion and violence against Jews sets this case apart from the two isolated incidents of violence alleged in [a previous case]. The Court is satisfied that Plaintiffs allegations, accepted as true and construed in their favor, raise an inference that encampment organizers, including NSJP and PCC [People's City Council], acted with an intent to deprive Plaintiffs of their Thirteenth Amendment rights...

Full story at https://reason.com/volokh/2026/01/26/suit-by-jewish-ucla-students-professor-and-chabad-rabbi-against-pro-palestinian-encampment-organizers-can-go-forward/.

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*The case decision can be found at: https://ia600402.us.archive.org/9/items/2-final-hjaa-report.-the-soil-beneath-the-encampments/UCLA%20case%20can%20go%20forward%20-%20MATTHEW%20WEINBERG%20et%20al.%2C%20Plaintiffs%2C%20v.%20NATIONAL%20STUDENTS%20FOR%20JUSTICE%20IN%20PALESTINE%20et%20al.%2C%20Defendants%201-20-2026.pdf.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 3:10 AM No comments:

Labels: diversity, UCLA

Wednesday, January 28, 2026

Watch the Regents Meetings of January 20, 2026

We are catching up with the Regents last week. On January 20th, the meeting began with public comments. Topics included women's sports at Davis, union negotiations for interns and residents, climate change, rents and UC investments, NSF targeting of climate grants, food insecurity of grad students including undocumented, anti-Israel, handling of undocumented student data, exams for disabled students, and student dining workers.

Thereafter, the Health Services Committee handled an executive appointment. There was discussion of outreach to attract UC employees to UC health plans including dedicated phone lines and quicker access to open medical appointments. There was also discussion of students who were eligible for Medi-Cal (at least 7% of students) with regard to student health services.

The full board then convened. Chair Reilly thanked the governor for his budget proposal and said nice things about shared governance in working on speeding up faculty discipline (to be taken up the next day). President Milliken discussed federal cuts and litigation, thanked the governor for his budget, and expressed concern about international students and H-1B visas. Faculty Representative Palazoglu also expressed concerns about Trump-related issues and academic freedom. This was followed by a presentation on cancer research illustrated by a case study.

The Accountability report presentation noted an increase in enrollment, improvement in 4-year graduation rates, upward mobility of students, but also concerns about federal policy.

At the National Labs committee, all three labs had high performance ratings. It was noted that Lawrence Berkeley's current contract ends on May 31, 2030 and Lawrence Livermore on Sept. 30, 2031 with a possible one year extension. Los Alamos goes through Oct. 31, 2028. (The first two, it might be noted, extend beyond the current presidential term; the last does not.)

The Governance Committee adjusted some meeting dates for the Regents.

Public Engagement and Development heard a review of UCLA's green sustainable landscaping program and its use of native plants. There was a presentation by the UC Latinx Alumni Association on its activities. Finally, the student observer suggested post-graduation support for past students by alumni.

As always, we preserve Regents meetings since the Regents have no preservation policy. The meeting can be seen at the links below:

General link for the entire meeting: https://archive.org/details/1-regents-health-services-committee-public-comment-1-20-2026

Public comments, Health Services: https://ia801701.us.archive.org/32/items/1-regents-health-services-committee-public-comment-1-20-2026/1-Regents%20-%20Health%20Services%20Committee%20-%20Public%20Comment%201-20-2026.mp4

Health Services resumes, National Labs, Governance: https://ia601701.us.archive.org/32/items/1-regents-health-services-committee-public-comment-1-20-2026/2-Regents%20Health%20Services%20Committee%201_30%20PM%2C%20Board%2C%20National%20Labs%2C%20Governance%201-20-2026.mp4

Public Engagement and Development: https://ia801701.us.archive.org/32/items/1-regents-health-services-committee-public-comment-1-20-2026/3-Regents%20Public%20Engagement%20and%20Development%201-20-2026.mp4.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 3:30 AM No comments:

Labels: UC Regents

Straws in the Wind - Part 236 (Compact 2.0)

From the NY Times: ...*Trump aides ...are readying a second attempt to persuade universities to sign on to a voluntary "compact" that follows a list of the administration's principles, officials said. The first version got little traction. The White House is also examining how to enforce individual provisions, regardless of whether schools sign on, said May Mailman, the White House's senior adviser for special projects. Ms. Mailman said Mr. Trump's pressure campaign on universities had been "far greater than anyone could have expected." ...*

...One line item that the administration has already revived is a 15 percent cap on international students enrolled in undergraduate classes proposed by the compact. After the original proposal failed, the State Department began quietly prioritizing visa requests for students at schools under that 15 percent rate, Ms. Mailman, the White House adviser, said in an interview...

Full story at https://www.nytimes.com/2026/01/21/us/politics/trump-higher-education-2025.html.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 3:20 AM No comments:

Labels: politics

Former UCLA Law Dean Named Head of Columbia

From the Wall St. Journal: *Columbia University has agreed to hire the leader of the University of Wisconsin-Madison to become its next president, according to a person familiar with the matter.*

The Ivy League school has selected Jennifer Mnookin, who has led UW-Madison since 2022, to take the reins at Columbia sometime this year, the person said.

Mnookin led Wisconsin through a tumultuous period in higher education and rose to the top of a large candidate pool because of her success navigating polarized politics in Wisconsin and dealing with the federal government, the person added. Before leading UW-Madison, she was dean of ***UCLA's law school*** *and, before that, a law professor at the University of Virginia...*

Full story at https://www.wsj.com/us-news/education/columbia-president-jennifer-mnookin-wisconsin-madison-6e38c62d.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 3:10 AM No comments:

Labels: Columbia, UCLA

Tuesday, January 27, 2026

Bubble Worries

As we have noted on this blog, state revenues have come in ahead of projections thanks - it appears - to capital gains tax receipts related to AI-related stock.

The governor based his January budget on good revenue news continuing and was criticized by the Legislative Analyst and others for not taking account of the possibility that an AI bubble will burst, or at least the good revenue news won't continue.

If you want to worry about all of that, and what it could mean for the UC budget, consider this from the Washington Post:

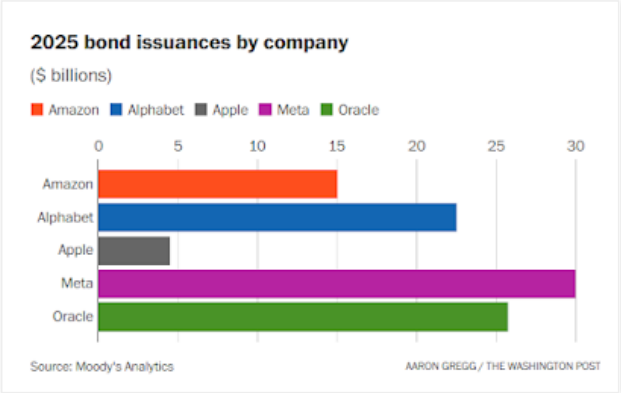
Big Tech is taking on record levels of debt, marking a new chapter in the artificial intelligence boom as names like Oracle, Alphabet and Meta pour big money into massive data centers and the energy systems needed to run them.

Technology companies issued a record $108.7 billion in corporate bonds in the last three months of 2025, according to data from Moody's Analytics. That's the largest total for any quarter and roughly double that of the previous three months. And the trend is extending into 2026: Some $15.5 billion in bonds were issued in the first two weeks alone.

For now, investors are assuaged by the eye-popping cash flow numbers from major tech companies. In the past 20 years, Big Tech companies including Google, Microsoft, Meta,

Amazon and Apple have built what are arguably the most profitable business models in history. In the third quarter, Google brought in just over $100 billion, with a margin of over 30 percent. All five are trillion-dollar companies, as are such AI darlings as Nvidia, Broadcom and TSMC.

But some economists and business analysts say the massive new bonds are spreading risk throughout the economy, with hundreds of billions being spent on a technology whose profit-making potential is not yet clear.



"It's a lot of debt, and a lot of it all of a sudden," said Mark Zandi, chief economist for Moody's. When companies are funding risky ventures with debt "it does put the broader financial system at risk. If the financial system is at risk, then the broader economy is." ...

Full story at https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2026/01/23/ai-corporate-debt-record/.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 3:30 AM No comments:

Labels: governor, LAO, State Budget, UC budget crisis

Straws in the Wind - Part 235

From Inside Higher Ed: *Education Secretary Linda McMahon and her legal team have dropped their appeal of a federal court ruling that blocked the department from requiring colleges to eradicate all race-based curriculum, financial aid and student services or lose federal funding. The motion to dismiss was jointly approved by both parties in the case Wednesday, ending a nearly yearlong court battle over the department's Feb. 14 Dear Colleague letter that declared race-based programming and policies illegal. If institutions didn't comply within two weeks, department officials threatened to open investigations and rescind federal funding. In response, colleges closed offices related to diversity, equity and inclusion; scrubbed websites; and cut other programming.*

First Amendment advocacy groups and the DEI leaders who remain in higher ed declared it a major victory for public education. Democracy Forward, the legal group that represented educators in the case, went as far as to say that it marks the "final defeat" of Trump's effort to censor lessons and scrub student support programs...

Colleges and universities aren't entirely in the clear, though. Just days before the Maryland District Court issued its ruling on the ED letter, the Department of Justice released its own nine-page memo on DEI. That guidance, which went even further than ED's guidance, said that

basing services on stand-ins for race—like "lived experience," "cultural competence" and living in a minority-heavy geographic area—could also violate federal civil rights laws. In response, colleges have closed campus centers and publications cater to certain racial or ethnic groups...

Full story at https://www.insidehighered.com/news/government/politics-elections/2026/01/22/ed-drops-appeal-order-blocking-anti-dei-guidance.

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From the Cornell Daily Sun: *A federal judge ruled... that an antitrust lawsuit filed four years ago against Cornell and 16 other elite colleges and universities must proceed to trial. The lawsuit alleges that the schools conspired to reduce financial aid and favor wealthy students. The suit also alleges that Cornell, through a now-defunct organization of 30 elite universities known as the 568 Presidents' Group, conspired to reduce financial aid in violation of the Sherman Antitrust Act. The 1890 act prohibits monopolies by restricting collusion that might limit competition.*

Specifically, the plaintiffs argue that Cornell and other universities worked together to ensure that financial aid pricing was similar between institutions. Because similar pricing of aid across universities was less than what the aid would have been without collaboration, the plaintiffs argue, the 538 Presidents Group ultimately favored wealthy students by increasing the overall cost of attendance. The 568 Presidents' Group was named after Section 568 of the Improving America's Schools Act of 1994. The section was an exemption to the Sherman Antitrust Act that allowed need-blind institutions to collaborate on financial aid principles to ensure financial aid was similar among universities. The group disbanded in 2022 after its namesake section expired and amid the filing of this suit alleging misuse.

However, the plaintiffs, a group of alumni from the 17 elite universities, allege that the universities listed in the suit are not protected under Section 568 because they did not behave in a way that was truly need-blind...

Full story at https://www.cornellsun.com/article/2026/01/federal-judge-rules-financial-aid-lawsuit-against-cornell-must-proceed.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 3:20 AM No comments:

Labels: Cornell, diversity, politics

ICE Matters

From an email circulated on campus last week:

The university asks that you be guided by the following in the event of immigration enforcement activity on campus:

1. **Please notify UCPD at 310-825-1491** as soon as possible if you are advised that an immigration officer is expected to enter, will enter or has entered the campus to execute a federal immigration order.
2. Students, academic employees and staff responding to or having contact with an immigration officer executing a federal immigration order should **contact UCPD at 310-825-1491 and campus counsel at 310-825-3828** for purposes of verifying the legality of any warrant, court order or subpoena. Inform the officer that you are not obstructing their access but are following campus protocol.
3. **UCLA Student Affairs, Academic Affairs and Personnel and Employee and Labor Relations are available as contacts if you are or may be subject to an immigration order or inquiry on campus.** Unless permitted by federal and state education privacy laws, these designees are prohibited from discussing your personal information, including immigration status, with or revealing that personal information to anyone. Please contact:
   - Students: Dean@saonet.ucla.edu
   - Academic employees: apoSB98notice@conet.ucla.edu
   - Staff: Employee.Relations@chr.ucla.edu

Posted by California Policy Issues at 3:10 AM No comments:

Labels: diversity, UCLA

Monday, January 26, 2026

Some day

From the LA Times: ...*Metro's board of directors unanimously approved an underground heavy-rail option Thursday that would go from Van Nuys to Sherman Oaks, pass under the mountains and Bel Air, stop at UCLA and ultimately end at the E Line/Expo Sepulveda station. The option, which was pushed forward by Metro's planning and programming committee last week, eliminates a controversial monorail proposal through the Sepulveda Pass and bypasses a stop at the Getty Center, which had been under consideration...*

The estimated cost of the project has ballooned since 2016, when voters approved transit improvements between the Valley and the Westside under Measure M. At the time, the project was slated as $6 billion, then grew to an estimate of $9.4 billion to $13.8 billion with a completion goal of 2033. Metro does not have an estimate for the current modified proposal. A previous version estimated a price tag of about $24.2 billion, but Metro said that wasn't accurate for the new model...

Full story at https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2026-01-22/this-multibillion-dollar-transit-project-could-improve-traffic-across-la-it-goes-to-vote-today.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 3:30 AM No comments:

Labels: transportation, UCLA

Straws in the Wind - Part 234

From Inside Higher Ed: *The House and Senate appropriations committees have jointly proposed legislation that would generally maintain the Education Department's funding levels, plus increase the National Institutes of Health's budget by more than $400 million this fiscal year. It's the latest in a trend of bipartisan congressional rebukes of President Trump's call to slash agencies that support higher ed. For the current fiscal year, Trump had asked Congress to cut the NIH by 40 percent and subtract $12 billion from ED's budget. The president proposed eliminating multiple ED programs, including TRIO, GEAR UP and the Supplemental Educational*

Opportunity Grant program, all of which help low-income students attend college. He also proposed reducing the ED Office for Civil Rights budget by over a third.

But the proposed funding package senators and representatives released [last] week maintains funding for all of those programs. "We were surprised to see the level of funding for the higher education programs actually be increased, in some regards—and be maintained," said Emmanual Guillory, senior director of government relations at the American Council on Education. "We knew that level funding would be considered a win in this political environment."
...

Full story at https://www.insidehighered.com/news/government/science-research-policy/2026/01/20/congress-proposes-increasing-nih-budget.

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From South Florida Sun-Sentinel: *Florida Atlantic University has decided not to renew the contract of a faculty member who was under investigation for social media posts about Charlie Kirk, despite an outside investigation finding that her conduct does not warrant discipline under the university's guidelines. Kate Polak, a full-time English instructor in the College of Arts and Letters, was placed on administrative leave with pay in September after the university received three email complaints with screenshots of comments posted on her personal social media accounts about Kirk and his murder. FAU also placed two other faculty members under investigation for their Charlie Kirk comments, though both were reinstated in November. Both of those faculty members were on the tenure track, while Polak is employed on a yearly contract basis.*

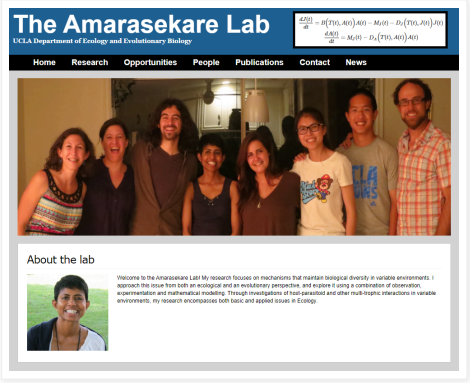
In a letter to Polak dated Tuesday, Oliver Buckton, chair of FAU's English Department, said the outside investigation conducted by Alan Lawson, a former conservative Florida Supreme Court justice, had concluded. The investigation found that her posts "would be understood by most readers as condoning on-campus violence" and discipline "would be constitutionally permissible based upon their potential for harming the University's mission," but that discipline still "does not appear warranted" under university regulations or its collective bargaining agreement with faculty...

Full story at https://www.sun-sentinel.com/2026/01/21/fau-professor-wont-get-job-back-after-charlie-kirk-posts/.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 3:20 AM No comments:

Labels: Florida Atlantic U, health care, politics

It's hard to keep the lid on - Part 10 (confirmation)



We noted last week the highly unusual open session of the Regents to discuss the tenure dismissal case of Prof. Amarasekara.*

After the open session, which was requested by Prof. Amarasekara, the Regents went into closed session to decide the case. The Daily Bruin reports that in closed session, the Regents endorsed the dismissal.** No surprise there. There was no way that the Regents would have reversed a decision endorsed by the UCLA chancellor and UCOP.

As we noted in prior posts, there is litigation in the background of this case. So, there may yet be further developments.

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*https://uclafacultyassociation.blogspot.com/2026/01/its-hard-to-keep-lid-on-part-9-and-now.html.

**https://dailybruin.com/2026/01/22/uc-board-of-regents-approves-dismissal-of-tenured-ecology-professor.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 3:10 AM No comments:

Labels: UC Regents, UCLA, UCOP

Pension Payments at Risk - Part 2

In a previous post, we noted that there has been a security breach of some type whereby pension payments were diverted from the bank account to which they were supposed to go to a scammer's bank account.*

Exactly how this breach occurred, and why the victims' were not immediately notified, remains murky.

The UC Retirement Administration Service Center (RASC) has now posted a warning on its website:

https://ucnet.universityofcalifornia.edu/employee-news/staying-safe-in-a-digital-world/

It instructs pensioners immediately to contact RASC and gives this contact information:

Contact RASC

1-800-888-8267 (international callers: 1-510-987-0200)
Monday through Friday, 7:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. (PT)

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NOTE: Apparently, it is assumed that scammers don't work evenings, nights, or weekends.

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*https://uclafacultyassociation.blogspot.com/2026/01/pension-payments-at-risk.html.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 3:05 AM No comments:

Labels: email fraud, pension, pensions, uc retirement

Sunday, January 25, 2026

SAT vs. ACT vs. UC

Back in pandemic days, UC dropped the admissions requirement for submission of standardized tests: The SAT and ACT. Other universities did, too, but reconsidered and have been moving back. At the time the decision was made at UC, as blog readers will know, the Academic Senate produced a study indicating that the tests, as used in conjunction with other factors, was useful.

As blog readers will know, a report from UC-San Diego - which received a lot of (not favorable) publicity - highlighted major deficiencies in incoming students, particularly in math.*

A recent Washington Post story noted competition between SAT and ACT and also pointed to the fact that other prestigious universities have moved back toward testing in admissions:

Princeton University... announced plans to drop its test-optional policy in October, leaving Columbia University as the only Ivy League school that doesn't require test scores. Most

colleges temporarily dropped their testing requirements during the pandemic, but some have since reinstated the mandates.

*...More than 90 percent of four-year colleges are either test-blind or test-optional. But since the pandemic, more students have taken the test to get an upper-hand in admissions. A majority of students who filed applications through the Common Application by Jan. 1 included their test scores...***

In short, students are taking the tests, even if UC doesn't want to look at them. More selective universities are coming back to considering the tests as part of the admissions process. But there has been no move at UC or at the Regents to revisit the issue. Possibly, the lack of movement at UC is just a sense that to go back would suggest a mistake was made before. But other universities seem able to admit error and reverse direction. Possibly, there is paralysis at UC because of the ongoing conflict with the Trump administration. But given the billion dollar demand from the feds, it seems that no serious negotiations are going to be possible for a long time. Everything at UC can't be put on hold, therefore, awaiting some resolution.

The alternative is to start offering and requiring remedial courses to make up for K-12 deficiencies. Doing so would lower graduation rates and involve expenditures at a time when potential budget stringencies are looming.

It's time to revisit a questionable decision.

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*https://uclafacultyassociation.blogspot.com/2025/11/not-everyone-is-prepared.html.

**https://www.washingtonpost.com/education/2026/01/18/standardized-test-popularity/.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 3:30 AM No comments:

Labels: admissions, Columbia, Princeton U, UC, UC-San Diego

Straws in the Wind - Part 233

From Inside Higher Ed: *A federal judge recommended Friday that the Trump administration issue a student visa to a Babson College freshman whom ICE agents wrongfully deported to Honduras as she was traveling home to Texas for Thanksgiving...*

An assistant U.S. attorney for the Trump administration apologized last week for deporting Any Lucia Lopez Belloza on Nov. 22, despite a court order prohibiting such a move that had been issued the day before. "The United States, to its credit, apologized to Any and the court at a January 13, 2026 hearing for what it agrees was a tragic (and preventable) mistake," district court judge Richard Stearns wrote in his ruling last week. However, "there remains the issue of a remedy." Stearns suggested that the "simplest solution" would be for Secretary of State Marco Rubio to "exercise his considerable discretion" and grant Lopez Belloza a nonimmigrant student visa so she could continue her studies at Babson "while her immigration status plays out in due course in the appropriate courts of law." ...

Full story at https://www.insidehighered.com/news/quick-takes/2026/01/20/judge-urges-visa-wrongfully-deported-babson-student.

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From The Guardian: ...*At Portland State University, a public university in Oregon, the administration last year cited an $18m budget deficit when it laid off 17 non-tenure faculty members – 15 of them from the school's college of liberal arts. While the university also laid off dozens of non-teaching staff, and is threatening the jobs of dozens more, it has contracted with Gray Decision Intelligence, a higher education analytics firm, to launch an overhaul of the university's academic programs. The plan – dubbed "Pivot" – includes selecting academic programs to be "sunset" on the basis of "persistent low demand, weak financial contribution, and limited mission alignment", according to a 45-page prospectus shared with the Guardian. The review includes "program vitality reports" based in part on an analysis by the software and consulting firm, which offers AI-generated reviews of "student demand, job market trends, and competitor activity" to clients that include more than two dozen private and public universities – including Montclair State – and technical schools.*

The union representing Portland State's faculty is fighting the cuts, and an independent arbitrator last month ordered the university to reinstate most of those laid off. The university initially refused to implement the binding decision but last week, after the Guardian reached out for comment, it reinstated 10 faculty members. Katy Swordfisk, a spokesperson for the university, wrote in a statement to the Guardian that "like universities across the country, PSU is facing a changed landscape for higher education. It is imperative that we review our programs and operations and optimize for the future so that we can continue to serve students and our region." She added that the process is also responsive to "demand" from students.

Bob Atkins, Gray Decision Intelligence's founder, said in an email that it does not make recommendations about cuts but rather gives clients "tools and training they use to make better-informed decisions"...

Full story at https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2026/jan/20/universities-humanities-programs.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 3:20 AM No comments:

Labels: Babson College, diversity, politics, Portland State U

Will Harvard Continue to Lead the Charge? - Part 112

From the NY Times: ...*Mr. Trump and his team also took early aim at Harvard, the nation's oldest and richest university. The school sued the administration in April, accusing the government of running roughshod over its constitutional and procedural rights. Harvard's lawsuit has infuriated the president and his team... Talks between the two sides are proceeding, but Mr. Trump has continued to view Harvard's lawsuit in deeply personal terms. He has fumed that Harvard hired William A. Burck, a lawyer who had represented key Trump allies and advised the Trump Organization. Mr. Trump fired him after he sued the administration on behalf of Harvard.*

When he complained about Mr. Burck during a negotiation session in October, Stephen A. Schwarzman, the billionaire investment executive who had taken a direct role in Harvard's negotiations with the White House, offered to drop Mr. Burck, according to three people familiar with the meeting. Mr. Trump responded by repeating his grievance about Mr. Burck. "It really wasn't smart of him to sue me," he said. Shortly thereafter, Mr. Trump told Mr. Schwarzman that he liked Mr. Burck but that their relationship had not worked out. Mr. Burck has remained Harvard's lead negotiator with the administration.

Mr. Trump has said publicly on several occasions that the university and the administration were close to striking a deal to end the feud, but no deal has materialized. On Tuesday, at a news conference on the anniversary of his inauguration, Mr. Trump said again that the two sides were

close to an agreement. “I hear we have a deal, but who the hell knows with them?” he told reporters. “They have a lawyer that wants to show how hot he is.”

...In the summer, Ms. Mailman, a Harvard-trained lawyer, had been facilitating what was Mr. Trump’s top priority at the time: extracting $500 million from Harvard to spend on work force programs. But before the agreement was finalized, Ms. Mailman took on a part-time role, which she still maintains. Her absence created an opening for Harmeet Dhillon, a hard-liner who leads the Justice Department’s civil rights division and who argued behind the scenes that the proposed deal was not tough enough on Harvard.

Ms. Dhillon pushed for more policy concessions and for the inclusion of a fine of at least $200 million — a nonstarter for Harvard, according to government and university officials. [Trump aide Stephen] Miller has shown little interest in easing any tension with Harvard, according to two administration officials involved in the discussions...

Full story at https://www.nytimes.com/2026/01/21/us/politics/trump-higher-education-2025.html.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 3:10 AM No comments:

Labels: Harvard, politics

In Dialogue or in Denial - Part 2

In a previous blog post in late December, yours truly noted that while UCLA touts its Dialogue Across Difference program as its response to the encampments, protests, and related events that followed the October 7, 2023 Hamas attack, the program in practice avoids reference to the events that are its supposed justification.* It operates in denial even though its leadership - in an op ed in the Bruin - indicated that there ought to be programming that addressed the underlying issue.

We noted that the actual Dialogue Across Difference combined kumbaya - generic let's all get along - with topics that weren't especially controversial on the UCLA campus.

Yours truly came across a recent article in the Columbia Daily Spectator that described an attempt by Columbia to require incoming students to take kumbaya-type training proctored by "RAs," resident advisers (grad students) who normally attend to residence halls. Columbia apparently used an outside organization for its programming:

On July 15, just over a week before Columbia announced the settlement [with the Trump administration], acting University President Claire Shipman, CC ’86, SIPA ’94, wrote a statement to the University community referencing the development of “programs that will go beyond traditional trainings.” Shipman described them as part of a broader push to “build bridges” and “deepen our understanding of each other,” especially in relation to antisemitism. It was then that she also introduced a new partnership with Interfaith America.

According to its mission statement, Interfaith America works with campuses, corporate workplaces, and civic spaces to “equip leaders to create institutional cultures where people respect, relate, and cooperate across difference.” In higher education, their goal is to make “religious diversity a vital part of the college experience.”

Columbia received up to $10,000 from the organization after applying to its Teaching and Learning Pluralism Cohort, which focuses on helping faculty inspire in their students a “respect for diverse identities and divergent ideologies, mutually inspiring relationships between diverse

communities, and cooperation for the common good." In its application, Columbia was required to respond to prompts about opportunities and challenges regarding "pluralism" on its campus...

Interfaith America selected Columbia as one of five participating universities, which also include the College of Charleston, Cornell University, Goucher College, and James Madison University. Representatives from each institution convened for the first time in early August 2025.

Kevin Eckstrom, Interfaith America's chief strategic communications officer, emphasized that the goal of the partnership is institutional transformation. "The whole idea is to embed pluralism into the DNA of the organization," he said in an interview with Spectator. The program consists of six virtual convenings, where faculty and administrators share and receive methods, materials, and "best practices on pedagogies for pluralism," Rebecca Russo, Interfaith America's vice president of higher education strategy, told Spectator.

The Columbia Center for Teaching and Learning, which promotes an "inclusive" teaching approach, is adapting Interfaith America's "Bridging the Gap" curriculum to integrate it into campus culture...

Interfaith America distributed a case study to RAs at their August 2025 training, titled "Craft and Conflict on Campus." It centered around a hypothetical dispute in a quilting club at a fictional university after a member contributed a quilt square reading "Jesus is Lord!" for the group's annual commencement quilt. In the scenario, club leaders deem the square's message exclusionary and ask the student to replace it, prompting pushback from other members who call the decision censorship and argue that it reflects an anti-religion bias. As the conflict escalates—with leaders considering new rules banning religious expression in quilts and the student contacting the campus newspaper—the club becomes divided over who gets to decide what counts as appropriate expression.

Interfaith America planned for RAs to lead groups of first-years through the case study, and then discuss four questions with them, including: "What's challenging about this situation?"; "Imagine you're the leader of the club. What are your main concerns? What happens if you ban the square? What happens if you don't?"; "Imagine you're the student who made the square in question. What are your main concerns? How does this controversy impact you?"; and "The members of the group are feeling pressure to take sides. Why does this matter? How does it affect the situation?" ...

[RA Janie] Zhang said that the main issue RAs pointed out with the case studies was that they "did not feel like they were very applicable to issues that we were facing on campus." According to Zhang, the case study felt "elementary" compared to the more consequential and current topics that students wanted to talk about, such as Israel, Palestine, and the war in Gaza. She mentioned that RAs felt disappointed that "the workshop didn't really feel like it was helping with this big problem on campus." ...

Russo said that Interfaith America "intentionally wanted to choose a scenario that was not about the challenges that Columbia has been struggling with very publicly." She explained that the quilting scenario was a good proxy because it "helps bring out some of those questions about 'how do you navigate tensions and values'" that arise "when the expression of one person's values can come across as offensive or challenging to another person." ...

Full story at https://www.columbiaspectator.com/news/2026/01/22/columbia-mandated-ras-to-lead-a-new-pluralism-initiative-ras-said-it-made-them-political-pawns/.

UCLA and Columbia were basically tied for unfavorable national attention in 2024 with encampments and police intervention. Now both seem to want to have programming that nominally addresses what occurred through a combination of kumbaya and denial. Yet both are, or should be, capable of producing programming that deals with Israel-Gaza and the larger Middle East situation that does what universities are supposed to do: educate.

At UCLA, education on the actual issue that led to conflict seems at present to mean separate forums for separate opinions, i.e., no dialogue across difference. It doesn't have to be that way, but a change would mean a different direction for the Dialogue Across Difference program which would likely entail new management.
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*https://uclafacultyassociation.blogspot.com/2025/12/in-dialogue-or-in-denial.html.

I Never Promised You a Rose Bowl? - Part 10 (alternative ain't happening)

Given the current conflict between Pasadena and UCLA over the latter's desire to exit the Rose Bowl for SoFi Stadium, the idea of a third way has (re)appeared: Create a stadium on campus.

From the LA Times: *The latest proposal came from L. Carlos Simental, a lawyer and UCLA alumnus. Simental wrote an editorial in the Daily Bruin* contending that the school should construct a donor-funded, 45,000-seat stadium on the site of the Drake Stadium track and field facility...*

"It just ain't going to happen," said John Sandbrook, who was a UCLA assistant chancellor under Charles Young and a central figure in the school's move from the Coliseum to the Rose Bowl before the 1982 season. Among other things, Sandbrook said, the practical realities from an architectural standpoint make an on-campus stadium nearly impossible. Construction would necessitate losing a major portion of the underground Parking Structure 7 and at least one-third of the recreational fields, not to mention cutting into the tennis stadium and Bruin Walk to accommodate the southern part of a new, expanded football stadium.

There would have to be a new service tunnel into the stadium from Charles Young Drive north and a new entryway into Parking Structure 7. A dedicated access lane to nearby Ronald Reagan UCLA Medical Center, the primary trauma center on the westside, would have to be created, further snarling traffic. "You are basically blowing up things and having to rebuild it," Sandbrook said. "You don't say for the sake of six football games a year, 'We're going to do all these things.'" ...

Full story at https://www.latimes.com/sports/ucla/newsletter/2026-01-12/bruins-on-campus-stadium.

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*https://dailybruin.com/2026/01/09/op-ed-ucla-must-build-on-campus-football-stadium-to-reclaim-athletic-identity.

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So, if the on-campus alternative is not an option, there is still another puzzle. Why does UCLA want arbitration while Pasadena wants a court judgment? Wouldn't breaking the contract by UCLA lead to a big dollar payout, regardless of the locus of the decision? From the LA Times:

...UCLA filed a motion to move the matter from Los Angeles Superior Court to arbitration, which would keep the proceedings out of public view. Attorneys for the Rose Bowl and Pasadena contend that the case should play out in open court because it involves two public entities and is of great interest to the public. "The complaint by Pasadena and the Rose Bowl is partially a contract claim and partially addressed to the court of public opinion," Haagen said. "So one of the things they certainly believe they want is to have this play out in the L.A. Times and to enlist public interest in it."

Why would that matter? [Paul] Haagen [co-director of Duke's Center for Sports Law and Policy] said it could invite legislative intervention if a public portrayal emerges that is unflattering to UCLA. "Part of it is explaining to your own voters what you're doing and that you're not hapless and stupid and you didn't agree to all of this work on the Rose Bowl and now you're not getting anything" in return, Haagen said. "But also if the narrative is 'greedy UCLA is going back on its word, not meeting its commitments,' that's kind of a big impact." ...

Full story at https://www.latimes.com/sports/ucla/story/2026-01-19/can-ucla-be-forced-to-stay-at-rose-bowl-legal-scholars-weigh-in.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 3:30 AM No comments:

Labels: athletics, UCLA

Straws in the Wind - Part 232

From the Yale Daily News: *The committee that makes recommendations to the Yale Corporation about the University's investments last week rejected a proposal for Yale to divest from several military and natural resource companies, including the data analysis and technology firm Palantir. The Advisory Committee on Investor Responsibility's rejection email, which was posted on the Instagram page of the Endowment Justice Collective, a student group, said the committee decided to reject the students' proposals to divest from the British oil company BP and gas companies Ring Energy and LNG because "neither topic meets criteria for a divestment recommendation." ...Palantir has previously denied its involvement in surveillance operations but reaffirmed its "support of and solidarity with Israel" in April 2025.*

...In the email he sent to students, [Committee Chair] Gillingham said that the proposals did not meet the criteria for divestment as outlined on the committee's FAQ page, which references a "very high bar" for divestment drawn from "The Ethical Investor," a guide written by Yale professors in 1972 for making investment decisions...

Full story at https://yaledailynews.com/articles/investor-responsibility-committee-rejects-students-divestment-pitches.

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From Inside Higher Ed: *All Florida public universities would be banned from hiring foreign workers on H-1B visas under a policy change that the Florida Board of Governors will consider next week. Next Thursday, the board's Nomination and Governance Committee will consider adding to a policy a line saying the universities can't "utilize the H-1B program in its personnel program to hire any new employees through January 5, 2027." If the committee and full Board of Governors approve the addition, there will be a 14-day public comment period. The proposal... comes after Florida governor Ron DeSantis ordered the state's public universities in October to "pull the plug on the use of these H-1B visas." Fourteen of the Board of Governors' 17 members are appointed by the governor and confirmed by the state Senate...*

Full story at https://www.insidehighered.com/news/quick-takes/2026/01/22/florida-proposes-h-1b-hiring-ban-all-public-universities.